

# Fashionable Miss Breitung's Unwelcome Love

## If the Family Gardener, Kleist, Could Win Her Love Why Couldn't Young Redmon, a Sturdy American and an Army Aviator?

THE postal authorities have under arrest a New York oil broker, John N. Redmon, who has been writing love letters to Mrs. Herbert Richter, only daughter of the well-known banker and shipowner, Edward N. Breitung, of New York, Chicago and Marquette, Mich.

Mrs. Richter is better known to the newspaper-reading public as Miss Juliet Breitung.

Miss Juliet's own heart has led her into one unusual romance, and it is, perhaps, not surprising that Mr. Redmon felt, as he says, that his claims as a suitor might be acceptable. Seven years ago she married her father's gardener, Max Frederick Kleist, who shortly thereafter sued Breitung for \$250,000 for wrecking the marriage.

In the Summer of 1913 a journal that devotes its columns to the doings of the socially prominent carried a notice to the effect that "Mrs. E. N. Breitung and her pretty daughter Juliet left Chicago in July, and it may be many a month before they will return, for they have taken a villa at Versailles for the Summer, and then next Fall Miss Breitung is to make her debut and there are to be two presentations, one in London and the other in New York."

The New York presentation was never made. Early in the Winter of 1913 the rumor began to be whispered around in social circles that Miss Breitung and some one socially negligible, some one named Kleist, had been married secretly in New York in November. The rumor spread and gained credence, until finally it reached the newspapers, and in March, 1914, the facts as to the marriage license and ceremony all came out.

At first the Breitungs, including Juliet, denied that there had been a marriage and refused even to admit that they knew of any such person as Max Frederick Kleist. This was a silly thing to do because the truth was easy to establish. Yes, the fashionable Miss Juliet had certainly married the family gardener! The heiress of the Breitung millions was a laborer's wife!

Following the Breitungs' denial the facts in the case were laid bare by Kleist's family, proud to be allied to wealth and fashion and seeing no reason why they should hide their light under a bushel. Toward the end of the month the Breitungs had to admit that the marriage had taken place. It then developed that the mysterious Kleist had first met Juliet while he was employed as a gardener on the Farrell estate, adjoining that of Breitung, at Marquette. Later Kleist went to work for Breitung and the romance developed like a hot-house plant. After the Summer in Versailles mentioned above Mrs. Breitung and Juliet returned to Marquette for a few weeks and then came to New York. Kleist followed ardently, and on November 22, 1913, unable longer to resist his pleadings Juliet wedded him.

After the ceremony Juliet returned to her parents and Kleist disappeared.

In April, 1914, soon after the marriage became known, the bridegroom reappeared in New York and served notice on Mr. Breitung that he, his son-in-law, held him responsible for blighting the garden of his heart and all its tender flowers; informed him, too, that he was to be sued for \$250,000 for doing it. Kleist stated at the time that he had been working in Breitung's mines at Mogollon, N. M., ever since the marriage. He also alleged that it was Mr. Breitung who had sent him there.

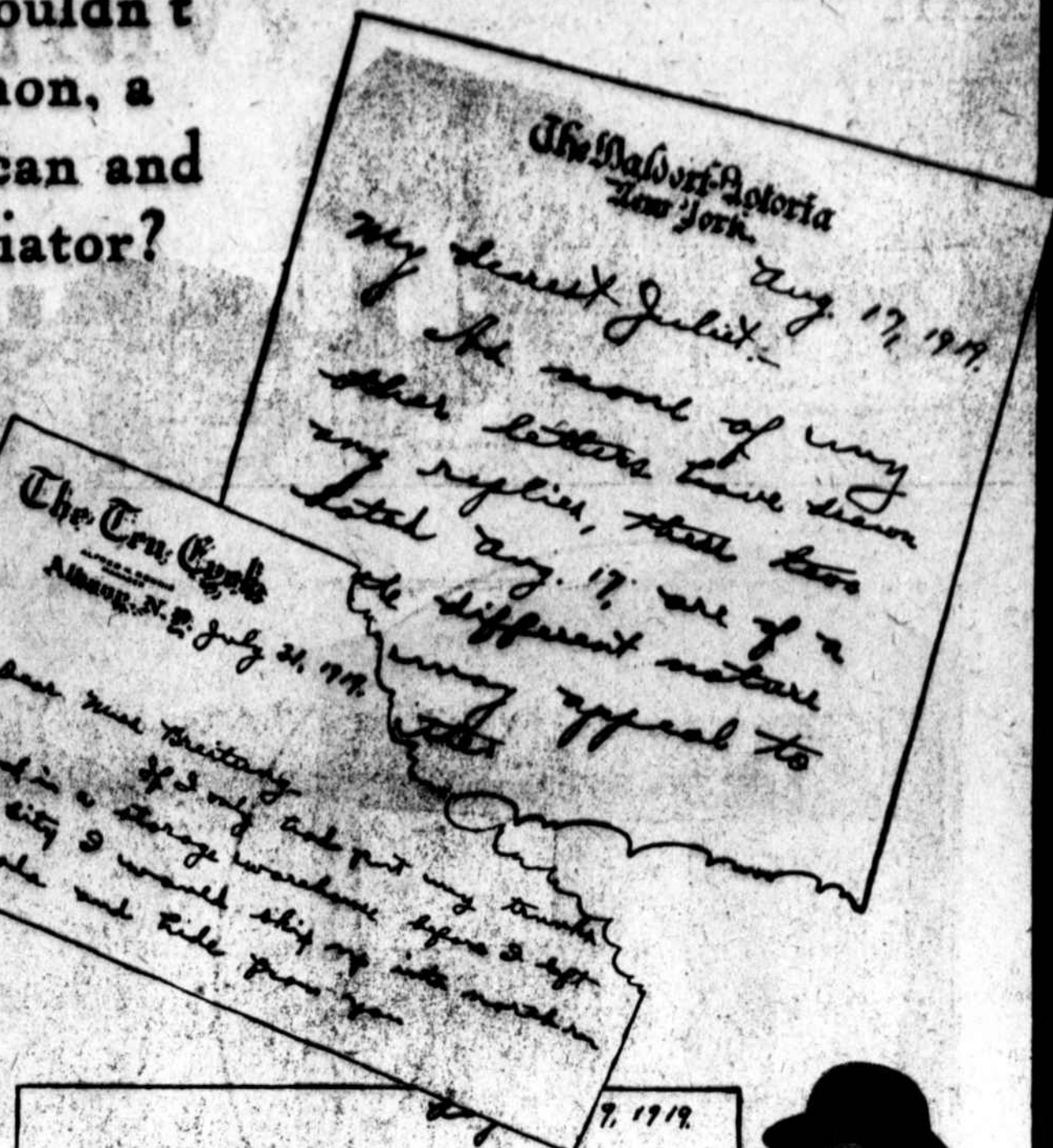
"Back to the mines, and out of the garden," it appeared Mr. Breitung had, in effect, said to him.

The trial was quite sensational. In telling how the plant of love grew from the seeds, Kleist indicated that it had undergone a somewhat desert life. He testified that Juliet was the first to suggest marriage. "I never kissed her until she asked me to," he said, "and then I kissed her on the cheek."

Scores of the fervent love-letters from Miss Juliet were read into the records. But the whole thing resulted in a mistrial. In April, 1915, the case came up again, this time in the United States District Court before Judge Hough.

On the witness stand Kleist then asserted that after his secret marriage he had been forced to take a job in a New Mexico mine; that he had gone there under false representations made by Breitung and had been forced to carry dynamite, and that in his absence his wife had been treated from him.

Kleist's suit was dismissed. He appealed but the Appellate Court sustained Judge Hough's decision. This was



Photographic Fac-similes of Some of the 500 Letters Redmon Wrote to Julia Breitung. At the Right is Max F. Kleist, the Family Gardener Who Was Her First Husband.

In 1916. In March, 1918, Mrs. Kleist obtained a divorce from a Reno court. In December of the same year she was married again, this time to Herbert Richter, of East Williston, L. I.

Kleist's garden had just plumb been wiped out. But suddenly last year Miss Juliet (now Mrs. Richter) began getting scores of letters addressed to her as Miss Breitung. They were on hotel letterheads from all parts of the country and were signed J. N. Redmon. They professed the most devout admiration for her and they contained nothing indecent or suggestive. Some five hundred letters were written, in all.

The police were notified in September and the case was turned over to Detective Sergeant McCoy, of the New York police force and one of the ablest and most efficient detectives in America. McCoy, in fact, has an international reputation and has brought to a solution a number of cases which would have bothered Sherlock Holmes of fiction. McCoy very promptly located the writer, "covered" him for a few days to get evidence, and then arrested him close to the Breitung home at No. 16 East Seventy-sixth street, New York. A revolver, brass knuckles and a blackjack were found upon Redmon, but not, as had been suspected, any gardening tools.

At that time Redmon was evasive in his answers. The big romance in his heart was not quite ready to reveal, apparently. He promised to forget and was released in the custody of his parents, who had come from South Dakota to aid him.

Then a few weeks ago Mrs. Richter began to get love-letters again. And once more Detective McCoy hit the trail, and once more with his customary success. He caught Redmon in Newark and had him arrested there by the postal authorities.

Redmon this time was quite frank. He was only thirty-eight, he said, his heart still warm and lively. He had been de-

veloping oil properties. While this work is, it is known, extraordinarily imaginative, it had not exhausted Mr. Redmon's extraordinary imagination. In fact, it had only seemed to throw into stronger relief his pictures of his love and what a life they might lead together. He revealed also that he had been in the United States aviation service during the war.

Redmon was indeed frank about it all. He freely admitted having written the letters. He was deeply in love. He had read of Miss Breitung's romance with the family gardener. He had appealed to him. He had read those ardent letters she had written and that had formed part of the evidence during Mr. Kleist's suit. Mr. Redmon thought that letter writing was one of the high arts.

If, he had argued, Juliet had fallen in love with a gardener, just a humble laborer—well, how much more reason was there for falling in love with him. Kleist had worn overalls—never the uniform of his country, as Redmon had. Kleist's eyes had been fixed on the ground observing the growth of spinach, cabbage, onions and so on. His—Redmon's—eyes had been fixed on the stars. And hadn't he been closer to the star of love, the sweet evening and sometimes morning star, than most men? Flown closer to Venus, to be specific. He had!

Redmon, assaying himself, couldn't find a single particular calculated to arouse affection in a fair lady's heart wherein he wasn't superior to Kleist, the gardener. Why shouldn't he, then, have written of his love—have made strenuous effort to bring the object of his affections to his own way of seeing himself? Thus he argued.

And those letters of Juliet to gardener Kleist! Writing what was in his heart,



A Painting by Louis Mark of Mrs. Kleist-Richter When She Was Julia Breitung.

he lived in daily hopes of tapping the same epistolary fountain and directing its currents upon himself!

Redmon was held in ten thousand dollars bail at the request of Mrs. Richter's attorney for the Federal Grand Jury.

The growth of Redmon's strange infatuation is curiously shown in his letters.

He betrays a peculiar delicacy, at first, in mentioning her name. From Kansas City, under date of June 3, 1919, he wrote in a letter to a member of the firm of Knauth, Nathod & Kuhne, New York bankers, the following:

"There is one young lady in New York I have been wanting to meet for several years."

A little later, in another letter to the same firm—none of whom, by the way, he knew any more than he did Mrs. Richter—he lets himself out a little more.

"There is only one girl in New York or any place else I want, and if I don't get her I'll never take any one. The rest can all back up with no exceptions."

Then, spurred on by his growing affection, stimulated perhaps by further perusal of the love letters to gardener Kleist, Redmon became bolder. He actually, it appears, called on Papa Breitung. He didn't see Mr. Breitung and nobody noticed Redmon. However, the effect of his visit was as pronounced upon his career as any other interview with a loved one's papa could have been. Afterward there was a long silence from the mysterious correspondent who signed himself Redmon. Then one day the banking firm received a letter which, among other things, said:

"When in New York about a year and a half ago I called at her father's place of business, but walked out disappointed and went away in the army."

"Ever since that time I haven't given the matter much thought or tried to get any information until about a month ago."

The army had taken up his thoughts. In this Redmon showed a concentration and devotion to duty incomparably greater

than gardener Kleist, who never allowed either his roses or his cabbages to interfere with his love making.

And then Mrs. Richter received the following amazing communication from her unwelcome suitor:

"From the Waldorf-Astoria, New York on August 17, 1919, Redmon wrote:

"My Dearest Juliet:

"As none of my other letters have drawn any replies, these two dated August 17 are of a little different nature and may appeal to you better."

"They are more of the rough and Western style, but I believe you are a Western girl. I was born in Wisconsin, and if I am not mistaken I think you are a native of Michigan, possibly Marquette, up on the copper range."

"After going through so much I don't understand why you let me lie around two or three months without giving me any kind of a reply."

"I have never had anything against your father at all, and if he wants it that way I would go right in and help him, operating on his side with him and not against him."

"You will understand I have tried very hard to get a reply from you and get in touch with you to find out these things, but you know better than anyone else what success I have had meeting you so far."

"We don't want any regular weddings with all that red tape, etc. What we want to do is skip out and elope and put some black headlines in the newspapers. Let the newboys yell something else than strikes for a change."

"Elopements are very bad when the party is a complete stranger to the girl's parents and where they do not approve of him. I don't believe in such performances at all, but I am sure in our case it would be different. If I didn't think your parents had looked me up and had consented to let you marry me I wouldn't suggest our doing it."

"I have been through about four years of this without any kind of a change at all."



J. N. Redmon, the Unwelcome Suitor in His Army Uniform.

Don't you think that is about long enough and that I am entitled to an answer, say nothing of having the opportunity of meeting you for the first time?

"PLEASE give me an answer."

He signs himself modestly:

"Sincerely,

J. N. REDMON

Naturally, Mrs. Richter didn't answer this.

But right after this Redmon's impatience grew ungovernable. Mr. Breitung received certain threatening letters. The police were called in and Detective McCoy did his work.

Just what will become of Redmon is certain. He has an excellent army record and nothing against him. His only trouble appears to be his love for Juliet Breitung. And that he frankly, freely and who admits, glorying in it. He sees no reason why he shouldn't be acceptable. Somehow or other his mental vision does not seem to encompass the figure of her present husband, Mr. Richter. He just ignores him!

Love, indeed, does do strange things to men.